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Editor: Sarah Chappelow



# Green Thumb Gazette

## Update from the Chair

Through the summer I have been commenting on various aspects of the Community Garden. With this issue I would like to hear from gardeners, committee members and others who receive this newsletter. What are your impressions of how the season has gone? What are your suggestions for improvement in 2016 and beyond? In the September edition I will report on the feedback and suggestions. Here are some items you might want to consider.

- Did the irrigation system meet your needs? If not, suggest changes or improvements.
- Did you use the herb garden? Suggestions for improvements.
- Did you take advantage of any of the twilight educational programs? Which ones? Suggestions for next year.
- Do you want to have the Green Thumb Gazette continue next year? Content suggestions.

Please respond to: [agriculture03303@gmail.com](mailto:agriculture03303@gmail.com)

See you at the garden.

John Keegan, Chair

## Upcoming Workshops

### Growing Mushrooms

**Monday, September 14, 2015, 6:30 PM**

Do you like mushrooms? Would you like to grow mushrooms? If that answer is also yes, you're in luck because Boscawen Agricultural Commission is offering a workshop on growing shiitake mushrooms.

Jim Ramanek, Master Gardener and owner of Warner River Organics, will show you how easy and fun it is to cultivate edible mushrooms using logs, stumps, and the moist shade of your wooded property or the shaded back of the garage.

In this workshop, you will not only learn how to cultivate mushrooms but how to select wood, location, tools and supplies. Jim will present the whole process of drilling, plugging, waxing, stacking, waiting and forcing. You will learn about other mushrooms you can grow and receive information on suppliers for plug spawn.

### Barns and Facilities for Small-Scale Farms

**Monday, October 5, 2015, 6:30 PM**

**Presenter:** John C. Porter, UNH Cooperative Extension Professor and Specialist, Emeritus

John will cover the basics of building new barns and renovating old ones to meet the needs of small-scale farming.

This will include site selection, building orientation, building materials and floor plan ideas. There will be examples of barns for several types of livestock.

**Workshops will be held at the Boscawen Municipal Complex, 116 N. Main St. Workshops are free and open to the public. To register for these workshops, contact the Boscawen Ag Commission at 753-9188 x 301 or email: [agriculture03303@gmail.com](mailto:agriculture03303@gmail.com).**

## Harvesting and Storing Produce— by Ann LaCroix

Onions and garlic are picked when stems turn brownish. Dry onions and garlic by hanging them in small bunches in a place warm but out of direct sunlight and give them lots of air to dry for a few days to a week. Hang off of hooks or dry on old screens. Do not wash onion or garlic dirt; just leave be to dry. Soft neck garlic can be braided when dry and onions can be stored in open weave mesh bags if you have access to some. Potatoes dug up are dried and stored in the same way. Carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips, and other root crops are often stored in sand to preserve flavor. A root cellar that stays dry, with a temperature above freezing and little moisture is an ideal storage area to hold produce for over the winter months. Herbs can be dried in the same way using hooks, screens, or in a dehydrator, then stored in glass jars in a cool place away from the stove.



### Blanching and Freezing Produce: the Basics

Freezing vegetables is a fast and easy form of food preservation, and most crops, such as asparagus, broccoli, green or yellow beans, peppers, summer squash, zucchini, dark leafy greens and all types of juicy berries, will actually be preserved best if frozen. Part of the beauty of freezing vegetables is that you can easily do it either in small batches — thus making good use of odds and ends from your garden. Unlike with canning, you don't have to pay attention to acidity or salt when freezing vegetables. Instead, you can mix and match veggies based on pleasing colors and flavors — for instance, using carrots for color, and green-leafed herbs for extra flavor. You can include blanched mild onions in your frozen combos; however, don't include garlic, black pepper or other "seed spices," which can undergo unwanted flavor changes when frozen.



Only use fruits and veggies in excellent condition that have been thoroughly cleaned. Most vegetables you plan to freeze should be blanched for two to five minutes, or until they are just done. Blanching — the process of steaming vegetables for a set amount of time, then immediately plunging them into cold or iced water — stops enzyme activity that causes vegetables to lose nutrients and change texture. The cooled veggies can then be packed into bags, jars or other freezer-safe storage containers. Fruits or blanched vegetables can also be patted dry with clean kitchen towels, frozen in a single layer on cookie sheets, and then put into containers. Using cookie sheets for freezing ensures that the fruits and vegetables won't all stick together, thus allowing you to remove a handful at a time from the container.

Unless you're freezing liquids — which require space for expansion — you should remove as much air as possible from within the freezer bag. Try using a straw to suck out as much air as possible. Investing in a vacuum sealer reduces freezer burn (the formation of ice crystals that refreeze around the edges of the food and damage its taste and texture) because the crystals have no space in which to form.



Cited source: Mother Earth News Magazine- Living Wisely: August/September 2013 edition: Preserving Vegetables From Your Garden by Barbara Pleasant; Ogden Publications, Inc., 1503 SW 42nd St., Topeka, Kansas 66609-1265

## Recipe Corner: Classic Basil Pesto

Toast in a small dry skillet under med-low heat 1/4 cup pine nuts till fragrant and brown

Using a **blender**, add the heated pine nuts and the following ingredients:

- 2 1/2 firmly packed cups basil leaves
- 1-2 cloves of fresh garlic, smashed/finely chopped
- 1 TBSP lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Chop in the blender until coarse and well mixed.

Freeze plops in ice trays, then store in freezer bags or plastic freezer containers. Ice tray size pesto is perfect for adding a little to sauces, burgers, chicken, etc.



## Recipe Corner: Preparing Paste Tomatoes for Sauce



1. Heat up a small amount of water in a pot with a steamer basket till boiling.
2. Cut tomatoes the long way and remove or leave inner seeds as you wish. Leave skins on for more vitamins. When water is boiling drop tomatoes in for 2-5 minutes or until tomato skin is beginning to peel away.
3. With a food processor or blender, add the hot tomatoes and blend till smooth.

Depending on the amount of tomatoes, add fresh crushed garlic cloves, chopped fresh oregano, chopped fresh basil, 1 TBSP balsamic vinegar, 1 tsp beef bouillon paste (optional), 1 tsp sugar (optional), grated onion, and 1 TBSP olive oil.

Some people add a tiny bit of finely chopped mint for extra flavor. Add 1 or 2 cans of tomato paste to thicken it up and a can of Delmonte Petite Cut diced tomatoes either herb or zesty jalapeno to add a spicy taste. Use your own spin on additions.

You can freeze the sauce in either regular Pyrex canning jars or use heavy duty freezer containers. Sauce should be good for 6 months to a year.



## Recipe Corner: Garden Vegetable Casserole

6 c. cubed, unpeeled red potatoes (2 lbs.)  
 1 c. diagonally sliced carrots  
 1 cup sliced fresh green beans  
 2 TBSP margarine or butter  
 ½ c. chopped onion  
 ¼ c. all- purpose flour  
 2 ½ c. skim milk  
 1 ½ c. (6 oz) shredded reduced fat sharp cheddar cheese, divided  
 1 tsp. dried chopped dill  
 1 tsp. dried chopped marjoram  
 1 tsp. dried basil  
 ¼ tsp salt  
 ¼ tsp pepper  
 ¼ tsp. dry mustard  
 1 cup sliced zucchini  
 Vegetable cooking spray  
 1 large unpeeled thinly sliced tomato



Cook potato in boiling water 8 minutes until crisp-tender. Drain and set aside. Arrange carrot and beans in a steamer over boiling water. Cover and steam 6 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and set aside. Melt butter or margarine in a medium saucepan over medium heat, add onion and saute 3 minutes. Add the all- purpose flour and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Gradually add the milk, stirring constantly. Cook an additional 12 minutes until thick and bubbly, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, stir in ¾ of the cheese and the next 6 ingredients. Combine potato, carrot, beans, and zucchini in a bowl. Add cheese sauce. Stir gently. Spoon mixture into a 13x9x2 inch baking pan which has been sprayed with vegetable spray. Bake uncovered 20min 350 degrees. Add thin slices of tomato and the ¼ remaining cheese and cook for 5 minutes or until cheese melts. Yields: 8 1-cup servings

## Recipe Corner: Turkey Burgers

1 package of ground turkey  
 1 TBSP fresh chopped tarragon  
 1 TBSP fresh chopped parsley  
 Optional: Fresh chopped crimini mushrooms  
 Chipped or grated garlic  
 1/4 to 1/2 cup low-sodium teriyaki sauce (I use Kikkoman) as a marinade  
 Salt, ground pepper to taste  
 Add a dash of chili pepper if you like a kick



Mix, let sit in the refrigerator for at least 20 minutes, then fry up on med-low heat as you would a burger.

*This month's recipes submitted by Ann Lacroix*